

A LEPROUS RESURRECTION.

The Beecher-Tilton Scandal Stalks from Its Grave.

MRS. TILTON'S "QUICKENED CONSCIENCE."

She Asserts Her Sin and Withdraws All Former Denials.

MR. BEECHEER'S STRONG ASSEVERATION.

His Uniform Truth Against Her Alternating Confessions and Retractions.

OPINIONS OF PARTIES IN INTEREST.

That most celebrated of all cases, the Beecher-Tilton scandal, which a third public had believed to be forever "decently buried," has been again dragged forth in a manner and form that are almost startling. The revival comes from a quarter least expected and most likely to attract attention. The letter of Mrs. Tilton, published below, was obtained from Mr. Ira B. Wheeler, her former attorney in divorce proceedings, to whom it was addressed, and who attests its genuineness and authenticity.

MRS. TILTON'S LETTER.
 Mr. Ira B. Wheeler:—
 My dear Sir—A few weeks since, after long months of mental anguish, I told, as you know, a few friends, whom I had bitterly deceived, that the charge brought by my husband, of adultery between myself and the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, was true, and that the life I had lived so well the last four years had become intolerable to me.

This statement I now solemnly reaffirm, and leave the truth with God, to whom also I commit myself, my children and all who are dear to me.

I know full well the explanations that will be sought by many for this acknowledgment; a desire to return to my husband, insanity, malice, everything save the true and only one—a quickened conscience, and the sense of what was due to the church and justice. During all the complications of these years you have been my confidential friend, and, therefore, I address this letter to you, authorizing and requesting you to secure its publication.

ELIZABETH R. TILTON.

BROOKLYN, April 13, 1878.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

My husband was at No. 228 Madison street, Brooklyn, last evening, but was carefully guarded from intrusion by his mother, Mrs. Morse, who would admit no one to the house. The letter, when asked regarding the letter, declined absolutely to discuss the matter.

In the afternoon, before Mrs. Tilton realized that the letter had become public, she was questioned as to the authenticity of the confession, but was very guarded in her replies to all questions, and while she would neither deny nor admit the authorship her manner generally gave the impression that it was genuine.

After the interview Mrs. Tilton was not seen again, and up to midnight no one entered or left her house.

Among the persons who are acquainted with Mrs. Tilton and those who, living in the neighborhood, know her by sight there were several theories advanced as to the probable cause of the confession. By some it was said that financial troubles of the most serious nature were pressing upon Mrs. Morse and Mrs. Tilton, and the confession was made in the hope of a reconciliation with Mr. Tilton, and again by others that Mrs. Tilton was insane and was not responsible for any of her acts.

It was only stated that owing to financial reverses ex-Judge Morse had for some time been unable to pay the \$1,000 per annum that Mrs. Morse had theretofore received, and that in consequence she had been unable to pay the rent of her present house, and Mr. O. Water, the owner, had let it to another tenant after the 1st prox. In addition to these troubles it was said that Mrs. Tilton had lost some of her music scholars. These facts were urged as proving the necessity for some action of the sort, as it was said that a reconciliation with Mr. Tilton was possible only after a full confession on the part of his wife. Those who believed Mrs. Tilton to be of unsound mind stated that for some months back persistent efforts have been made by friends of hers to induce her to make a confession of the facts in the matter, but that she steadily refused until Saturday last, when she wrote the letter given above. Neighbors speak of "queer" actions on the part of Mrs. Tilton—that she was absent-minded and evidently irresponsible for her actions.

MR. BEECHEER'S DENIAL.

The following letter from Henry Ward Beecher is a square, emphatic denial of the statement made by Mrs. Tilton:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

I confront Mrs. Tilton's confession with explicit and absolute denial.

The testimony to her own innocence and to mine which, for four years, she has made to hundreds, in private and in public, before the Court, in writing and orally, I declare to be true.

And the allegations now made in contradiction of her uniform, solemn and unvarying statements, hitherto made I utterly deny.

I declare her to be innocent of the great transgression.

HENRY WARD BEECHEER.

WAVELEY, N. Y., Monday evening, April 15.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. BEECHEER—HIS EXPLICIT DENIAL—FIT FOR MRS. TILTON.

MR. BEECHEER'S LONG-SUSTAINED ASSEVERATIONS OF INNOCENCE AND MARVELS AT HER CHANGE OF MIND.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE HERALD.]

WAVELEY, N. Y., April 15, 1878.

Mr. Beecher lectured in Waverley this evening, and on coming down from the platform I placed in his hands a telegraphic copy of Mrs. Tilton's confession, which was to appear in the press of Tuesday morning. He read it quietly and seemed in no wise excited.

In reply to my question what he intended to do, he said:

AN EXPLICIT DENIAL.

"Nothing at present, except to give an explicit denial."

He seemed to be more sorry for Mrs. Tilton than troubled about himself. I asked him:

"Do you believe Mrs. Tilton wrote this of her own mind, or was she influenced?"

He replied:

"I have not spoken with Mrs. Tilton for over two years. I was informed several months ago that influences were being exerted through her children and others to effect a reconciliation with her husband, and that she energetically refused to consider it until he had publicly exonerated her from the charges brought against her. It was only a few weeks ago that the rumor came to me that she was in a morbid and self-denigratory state of mind."

CORRESPONDENT.—Has Mrs. Tilton ever intimated a consciousness of guilt before?

MR. BEECHEER.—So far from it, it is impossible to conceive, if her present confession is true, of such an elaborate, prolonged and extraordinary career of falsehood as she must have practiced. Upon her husband's statement of his accusations before the committee of the church she broke away from her husband's house, and refused to live with him. She took refuge in the house of a dear friend, to whom she gave an unvarying testimony of her own innocence and the baseness of her husband. She went before the investigating committee of Plymouth Church and with wonderful pathos cleared herself of every charge of domestic infidelity and underwent the closest questioning. She broke friendship with former friends for doubting her statements in this matter when the case was in the court.

HER DEMAND TO BE HEARD IN COURT.

Once, after her husband's testimony, to the surprise of my counsel and of all her friends, she rose in the Court and demanded of the Judge that she be permitted to testify to her innocence. She was examined repeatedly by my counsel and pled with the most searching questions, and by her consistent and explicit testimony satisfied them all of her innocence, and won their esteem. When the Council of 1875 was called several interviews were arranged between her and eminent gentlemen both of the clergy and of the law. In every case she satisfied them of her absolute innocence. Subsequently, at an interview arranged for the purpose of giving permanence to her declarations and form to her testimony, which was taken down by a shorthand writer and which I believe to be still in existence—although I have never seen it—she elaborately and in detail reaffirmed her innocence and mine. These are the most prominent instances of her uniform testimony. It should be borne in mind that she first charged me with this offense to her husband, and upon my visiting her she withdrew it in writing; that she subsequently renewed the charge; that she then again indignantly denied it, and left her husband's house, and for four years has continued in every conceivable form and under the most solemn circumstances to deny it until now, when once again, for the third time, she renews it.

AN AFFAIR TO CHARACTER.

Against this long and tortuous career I oppose my uniform and unimpeachable truthfulness.

WHAT THE "MUTUAL FRIEND"—OF OTHER DAYS THINKS OF IT.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE HERALD.]

ALBANY, April 16, 1878.

Your despatch announcing that Mrs. Theodore Tilton had written a letter which would be published in the morning confessing adultery with Henry Ward Beecher induced your correspondent to seek Mr. Frank Moulton, who had spent the evening in Albany, on his way East, and was about leaving for New York. Mr. Moulton was found in the sleeping car just five minutes before the departure of the one o'clock train this morning on the Hudson River Railroad. Having been shown the despatch he explained:

"What!—Has this just come?"

"Yes; does it surprise you?"

"I hardly know," answered Mr. Moulton, holding the despatch in one hand and thoughtfully brushing back his hair with the other. "I was convinced that the admission would be made, but I was hardly prepared to expect it at this time."

"You were convinced that Mrs. Tilton would confess to adultery?"

"Why, I knew it must come. I knew it from my knowledge of the woman. Elizabeth Tilton was no upright, so sincere minded that it was only a question of time when she would tell the truth. I remember that Theodore Tilton once asked me, 'Frank, do you believe Elizabeth will ever tell me before she dies?' and I answered him that she surely would."

"Was Tilton himself convinced that she would?"

"I think he came to expect that it would occur some day. He always believed in her abiding sense of truth and right. You may look through the record of the trial and you will not find an instance of his speaking of her harshly or even unkindly. He spoke of her as a white-souled woman. He always conceded that she was dominated and overcome by Mr. Beecher's influence in the guise of religion."

"Will this confession be a severe blow to Mr. Beecher?"

"A death blow," answered Mr. Moulton rather sadly. "I know them all so well that I can estimate the effect of so sudden an announcement. I was so near them all that I was as if I had heard their hearts ticking; but I have long ceased to have any connection with this matter, and again I say that although I expected Mrs. Tilton would surrender her heart before her death, the time selected takes me somewhat by surprise."

MR. EVARTS DOES NOT THINK IT A GOOD SUBJECT TO DISCUSS—WOULD RATHER DISCUSS GREENBACKS AT A PREMIUM.

[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE HERALD.]

WASHINGTON, April 15, 1878.

Secretary Evarts, who was counsel for Mr. Beecher in the Brooklyn trial, says that he has not heard a word in relation to the Beecher-Tilton matter for some time—so that, in fact, but what he has read in the newspapers. He had not heard of this latest development except as communicated by the mere statement that such a letter had been written, hence he had nothing to say. He could not believe it was true. It was not a good subject for the prosecution of legal leaders being worth a premium in gold.

MR. WHEELER'S STORY.

Mr. Ira B. Wheeler is a resident of Elizabeth, N. J., where his family have lived for many years. He is a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Elizabeth, and was for several years President of the Young Men's Christian Association there. His family is distantly connected with the Richards family (Mrs. Tilton's), and he has been an intimate friend of hers from youth as well as her legal adviser through the troubles of the last three years. Before, during and since the great trial, Mrs. Tilton frequently visited at Mr. Wheeler's house in Elizabeth; and he used to escort her daily to the court room in Brooklyn during the progress of the investigation.

The reporter called upon this gentleman at his house, No. 228 Morris avenue, Elizabeth, and held a conversation with him relative to the circumstances attending the writing of the letter and the causes which led Mrs. Tilton to this act.

"Will you describe to me the manner in which you received the letter?" said the reporter.

"It was handed to me to-day by Mrs. Tilton herself in New York," was Mr. Wheeler's reply.

husband, and that she energetically refused to consider it until he had publicly exonerated her from the charges brought against her. It was only a few weeks ago that the rumor came to me that she was in a morbid and self-denigratory state of mind."

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"Will you describe to me the manner in which you received the letter?" said the reporter.

"It was handed to me to-day by Mrs. Tilton herself in New York," was Mr. Wheeler's reply.

"Will you have the kindness to tell me the exact time and place?"

"It was between eleven and three o'clock. I will not tell you the exact place."

"Will you say who was present besides you and Mrs. Tilton?"

"I must also decline to answer that question."

"Do you know when and where Mrs. Tilton wrote it? Where you present when she did so?"

"I refer you to the letter itself for the time and place. I will not answer the other question."

"At whose dictation, if at any one's, or after whose copy, if any, did she write it?"

"It was a voluntary act, and was written from her own dictation."

"Is the language the offspring of her own mind?"

"It is wholly so. It was written entirely by her and without suggestion from any one."

"Was it, at any time previously, suggested to Mrs. Tilton, to make such a confession as this?"

"I must refuse to answer that question also."

"What remarks did she make when handing you the letter?"

"She said nothing, which does not appear in the letter itself."

"Can you tell me why she addressed this confession to you?"

"The letter itself explains the reasons for that. I am a distant relative, a lifelong friend, and a confidential adviser of hers."

"Did she make any verbal confession to you previous to writing the letter?"

"She told me a couple of weeks ago that she had made a confession to a few friends."

"Will you mention the names of those friends?"

"I must decline to do so."

"Can you give me some notion of Mrs. Tilton's motives in making this confession?"

"I believe her to be actuated only by a desire to free her conscience from the load upon it. She wished to make the truth known in the matter."

"Is her husband aware of her action in making this statement?"

"You may assert positively that Mr. Tilton knows nothing of the matter."

"Was any previous intimation given to Mr. Beecher or any of his friends of her intention?"

"None, whatever; I believe that this will be a total surprise to all parties."

"A statement was recently published that Mrs. Tilton had become completely reconciled to her husband. Do you believe it? Do you know of any such reconciliation?"

"I know of no expectation on the part of either of them that they will ever live together again."

"Have you acted as counsel to Mrs. Tilton?"

"I have acted in a certain sense as counsel to Mrs. Tilton; not as regards the affairs with Mr. Beecher, but as regards the relations between herself and Mr. Tilton. I had nothing to do with the Beecher defense."

Mr. Wheeler further expressed great sympathy for Mrs. Tilton. He said that she has undergone a great deal of suffering, and he hoped that she would find peace now at last.

CONVINCING OPINIONS.

Interviews were had with several lawyers and others prominently connected with the Beecher trial upon the probable cause and effect of Mrs. Tilton's so-called confession.

Mr. Thomas G. Shearman said that, having acted as counsel in the matter, it was manifestly proper that he should refrain from expressing any opinion, and he desired to be quoted as having "nothing to say." In reply to an inquiry of the reporter as to whether he was surprised at the appearance of Mrs. Tilton's letter, he said that he was not, and he thought that he shared that feeling with many of Mr. Beecher's friends. Recent circumstances in connection with Mr. and Mrs. Tilton's relations to each other had quite prepared them for such a publication.

Ex-Judge Morris also declined to commit himself to any expression of opinion or to give any reasons for his silence. To every inquiry addressed him he answered, "I have no opinion," "I have nothing to say," and "I am ready to talk on any other subject but this."

Mr. Roger A. Pryor, when shown the letter of Mrs. Tilton, manifested the greatest surprise, and said, "I am extremely sorry for Mrs. Tilton; poor woman, how she must have suffered." When asked as to whether he had any opinion in reference to it he said, "Even if I were disposed to talk about it, which at the present juncture I certainly am not, I should want to be well informed as to the circumstances under which the letter came into existence. I receive it with considerable confidence, because I know Mr. Wheeler to be a very reputable, cautious man, of good judgment, and who was a very prominent friend of Mr. Tilton's during the recent trouble. I should place great reliance upon anything that he should do through his instrumentality. However, all I can say now is that I am very sorry for Mrs. Tilton. I pity her very much. Anything beyond that I must decline to say in the present condition of the case."

INTERVIEW WITH MR. BEACHER.

A reporter of the HERALD called upon Mr. William A. Beach, senior counsel for Mr. Tilton in the suit against Mr. Beecher. When the announcement was made that Mrs. Tilton had written a letter acknowledging her guilty relations with Mr. Beecher, Mr. Beach expressed no surprise, but seemed very incredulous. In reply to the question what he thought of the letter he said to have been written by Mrs. Tilton, he said, in substance:—"This is the first intimation I have had of the existence of such a document, and I think it highly improbable that Mrs. Tilton should have written any such acknowledgment. In my opinion it is a hoax and the HERALD would be wise to have nothing to do with it. It would be very unnatural for any woman to make such a confession public, to blazon it in the eyes of the whole world."

"Do you not think the tortures of a guilty conscience would be a sufficient motive?"

"Sufficient, no doubt, to cause a private confession to her husband, for instance, or to her brother; but not to the whole world. Mr. Tilton is the only person who would have a sufficient motive to make the confession public."

"What do you think would be the immediate effect of such an acknowledgment on her part?"

"It would be a good thing for Tilton's case in the eyes of the people, of course, and would strengthen the conviction of Beecher's guilt, but the public is already satisfied with the scandal."

"Do you think it would result in a renewal of the old trial or the bringing of a new suit against Mr. Beecher?"

"No; the case will never be tried again. The immediate effect of an acknowledgment of guilt by Mrs. Tilton would be a moral and legal one. It would produce a great effect on the public mind and would lead to a great change of opinion, perhaps, but nothing beyond that. I do not think it would lead to a renewal of legal complications."

"In the event of another trial taking place would you be likely to serve again as counsel?"

"No; I should have nothing to do with it, and as I said before, I do not think Mrs. Tilton has written any confession or that the case will ever be retried. I have heard nothing of her having made an acknowledgment of her guilt, nor do I believe Mr. Fullerton has. If he had he would have communicated with me at once."

WHAT MR. FULLERTON SAID.

Ex-Judge William Fullerton appeared surprised at the news of Mrs. Tilton's confession. He thought it a singular acknowledgment, but one which he would be very apt to make, more apt than almost any other woman under the circumstances.

"Do you believe it to be a bona fide confession?"

"I think it possible, but hardly probable. There is nothing what Mrs. Tilton will or will not do, and throughout the entire case she has generally done the thing that was least expected. Before the trial she went to various friends and told the story of her shame. That is why I wanted to have her as a witness. Since the trial she has confessed her guilt again in private. It would be just like her to make a public confession now, though I can hardly believe that she has done so. It is possible that Tilton had an interview with her and promised that if she would confess her crime he would take her back. Whether he has done so or no of course I am unable to say."

"Do you know whether he is anxious for a reconciliation or whether he has made any advances whatever of late?"

"No; I cannot say what their present relations are."

"Would a confession of guilt by Mrs. Tilton revive the original case of Tilton vs. Beecher in the Brooklyn court?"

"Yes; I think it might. It is still pending, you know. It was never settled. No verdict was rendered."

EX JUDGE PORTER.

Ex-Judge Porter, of counsel for Mr. Beecher, was called upon at the Hoffman House. He had heard nothing of the letter, and did not think any written acknowledgment of guilt had been made by Mrs. Tilton. He would express no opinion whatever on the subject, but he gave an opinion on the merits or demerits of a hypothetical case or one which he was not connected. When asked if he thought an acknowledgment of guilt on the part of Mrs. Tilton would bring the matter into the courts again, he said he did not think it would. Mr. Tilton, he said, and Mr. Beecher, and his wife could not appear on the stand for her husband. During the trial and since, however, she had repeatedly asserted her innocence of the crime with which she was indirectly charged. Her contradictions now of her former assertions could not affect the case or bring about another trial. When asked if he knew whether or no any efforts toward reconciliation had been made by Mr. Tilton, he replied that he had seen neither of the parties since the trial and could not say on what terms they were at present. As to whether he would consent to appear again as counsel in the case if the trial were to be resumed, he declined to state. The only statement he was willing to make was that the report of Mrs. Tilton's confession was news to him and that he discredited it.

OLIVER JOHNSON.

Mr. Oliver Johnson, who was associated with Theodore Tilton in the editorial management of the Independent, and who figured somewhat conspicuously in the Beecher trial, has been for about two years past a resident of Orange, N. J., where he is engaged in journalistic pursuits.

"I place no credence whatever in any such confession," said Mr. Johnson most emphatically when found last evening. "Who will believe a woman who now confesses the same thing she has repeatedly and emphatically denied? Mr. Beecher won't care that much for it," and Mr. Johnson snapped his fingers in a contemptuous manner; "it will not affect him in the least."

"But what can have induced Mrs. Tilton to make the confession?" asked the reporter.

"Why?" replied Mr. Johnson, and a sarcastic smile played about his lips. "She has likely been hired with a strong emphasis on the insinuation 'third' to make what you are pleased to call a confession."

Mr. Johnson added that he felt sorry the old trouble was being brought up again. He knew Mr. and Mrs. Tilton in better and happier days, but times had changed, and he could